



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health and Family Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
Helene Nelson, Secretary

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For Immediate Release

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NORTHERN COUNTIES RECEIVE GRANT TO FIGHT TOOTH DECAY IN CHILDREN

MADISON—The Department of Health and Family Services announced today that it is awarding more than \$125,000 to counties in northern Wisconsin and to the Lac Courte Oreilles tribe to prevent tooth decay in children.

“We’re extremely pleased to help health departments address the oral health needs of children in Wisconsin as part of Governor Doyle’s *KidsFirst* agenda,” said Secretary Helene Nelson. “Tooth decay can be debilitating for children. It affects their energy level, ability to obtain and maintain nutrition, and their ability to concentrate in school.. The good news is that tooth decay is preventable.”

A 2002 statewide survey of Wisconsin third-graders found nearly half of the northern region’s children, 46 percent, had untreated decay – the highest of any region in the state. Funding will support local efforts to provide fluoride treatments and supplements given to children by local health departments, schools, or primary care health providers.

Wood, Ashland, Bayfield, Iron, Price, and Taylor counties will receive nearly \$8,000 per year through 2007 for fluoride varnish projects.

The Vilas County Health Department will be awarded \$1,196 to expand its fluoride mouth-rinsing program. The Lac Courte Oreilles Band of Lake Superior Chippewa will receive approximately \$12,400 for community water fluoridation.

Oneida, Langlade, Lincoln, Forest and Taylor counties will receive between \$6,000 and \$8,000 per county for oral health data collection awards. In 2005, Price, Bayfield, Iron, Ashland counties received money for data collection.

Funding for this project was provided by the UW School of Medicine and Public Health from The Wisconsin Partnership Fund for a Healthy Future.

To learn more about Oral Health programs in Wisconsin, visit http://dhfs.wisconsin.gov/health/Oral_Health/

Preventing Tooth Decay

Tooth decay is the most common chronic infectious disease of children. Early childhood caries, an aggressive form of tooth decay found in infants and toddlers, can begin as early as 12 months and may be well advanced by a child’s third birthday. A 2003 statewide survey of Wisconsin Head Start children indicated that 48% had experienced dental caries and 24% had untreated dental caries.

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Decay Prevention Tips:

- Establish a dental home. Visit your oral healthcare provider regularly.
- Children over two years of age should brush with a pea-sized amount of fluoride toothpaste. Supervise tooth-brushing and encourage the child to spit out excess toothpaste.
- Ask your medical or dental provider if your child's drinking water has enough fluoride. Fluoride in drinking water is most important for a lifetime of health teeth. If it does not, you may need to give your baby fluoride drops or tablets each day from 6 months of age.
- Do not add sugar, sweeteners, soft drinks or honey to a bottle or pacifier. Do not put baby to bed with a bottle as it may increase the chance of tooth decay and ear infection.

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